342 lages of the lowlands where the houses have
[354] small windows, which improve ventilation
and illumination slightly. In places like
342 Chanal, where there is abundant lumber,
184 the sides of the houses are built with wood-
en boards set vertically. The largest and
best-built houses are in Tenejapa center.

Generally, the hut is divided into two rooms: the front is parlor and kitchen, the rear is bedroom. In Bachajon the rear room serves as bedroom and kitchen, the front room for sewing and grinding and the re-
[574] ception of visitors. In Amatenango del Valle the front of the house is open and
[323] used as a porch for visits. Ceramic work
[251] is also performed here. In one room of the house a bin of wood or reeds stores corn.
[343] Sometimes, small structures which serve as granaries are built inside the hut.

343 Among the auxiliary structures outside is
515 the temascal (*pus*) used for steam baths. Not every hut has a *pus* since one is enough to attend the needs of several neighboring families. The *pus* is a small room 1.5 m. high by 2 m. on each side, built of stones and clay. The roof is flat. Inside a hollow forms a hearth for heating stones. Water thrown on these red-hot stones produces the necessary steam. On the floor are boards on which people lie while taking the bath.
[184] Among the Tzeltal and Tzotzil the *pus* is
[757] not only for cleanliness but also for the cure
[846] of certain diseases and to strengthen women after childbirth. Sweat baths are more commonly taken in Tierra Fria than in Tierra Caliente.

417 The other structures near the hut are the chickencoop and the hogpen.

352 Furniture is limited to essential items. In the kitchen are the three hearth stones, the comal (*samet*), the grinding stone (*chá*), a bench or strong table to hold the metate (*ah-ken*), one or two small tables (*matz-malté* or *vebalté*) 25–39 cm. high and 30–40 cm. in diameter, and small benches 15–20 cm. high made of scooped-out tree trunks
415 (*tzanté*). Kitchen equipment includes earthenware (pans, pitchers, and jars) and

[P. 207-B]

4: Villa Rojas E-4, 5 (1938-1944) 1969
NV9 Tzeltal NV9

787 776 been taken away by the local authorities and sent to the Indians' Affairs Office in San Cristobal.

Life Cycle

842 183 *Pregnancy and Childbirth*

The strongest desire of every Tzeltal couple is to create a numerous family, preferably 843 [833] boys. The relationship between sexual intercourse and pregnancy is well understood among the Indians. They know that pregnancy lasts nine months and they keep a 843 789 good count of it. On the other hand, there are ideas about the possibility of the woman being influenced by old men or "the owners of the nagual," who can interrupt pregnancy and change the fetus from one woman to another. This is why a woman who thinks she is pregnant for three or four months suddenly realizes that she carries nothing any more, while another one, maybe her neighbor, finds herself in advanced pregnancy, giving birth a few months later. It is to be stressed, however, that these changes can take place only among married women.

844 [181] In conservative villages (Tenejapa, Oxchuc, Cancuc) there is no professional midwife. Children are delivered by the oldest women in the neighborhood.

[757] [237] When labor begins, the first thing is to give the mother a beverage made of powdered opossum tail dissolved in boiling water. It is very common for Indians to have a dry tail hanging next the fireplace. The woman kneels at labor, facing the midwife. The husband's belt or the woman's rebozo is tied very tightly around the upper part of the abdomen to prevent the child from "going up again." The mother can also help herself by seizing a rope tied to the roof, or taking firm hold of any post of the house. The umbilical cord is chopped with a machete or cut with scissors, supported on an [241] [824] ear of corn. This ear is afterwards used as seed and is considered very fertile.

[759] When labor has finished, the mother is given another hot beverage of pepper.

[P 223-B]

844 cloves, and corncake, to keep her "warm
[757] and fertile." The placenta can be burned,
[842] thrown to the dogs, or deeply buried in case
the mother does not want another preg-
[789] nancy soon. The umbilical cord is put under
a three-stone fireplace if the baby is a girl,
on top of a tree if it is a boy so that he may
become brave and agile when adult.

846 A few hours after childbirth, at the latest
515 the next day, both mother and child take a
temascal (steam bath). Some women stay
in the temascal until they feel completely
recovered.

Childhood and Adolescence

789 During the first weeks of life, children are
774 in danger of losing their souls because their
inexperience makes them an easy prey to
the naguales and bad spirits who wander
around. As protection, mothers place a small
[237] piece of beeswax at the back of the child's
head or tie, as a bracelet, a red or blue
thread around the wrist. If none of these
precautions are taken, the mother has to
cover with branches the paths her child
walks, so that his soul can easily find its way
in case he loses it.

789 Because of all these dangers, fathers al-
852 ways try to perform the ceremony of "seed
774 the soul of the child" as soon as possible. It
[553] is during this ceremony that the child is
given a name, later confirmed according to
[608] Catholic ritual at the ceremonial center. A
very important aspect of the ceremony is
selection of the godparents.

753 *Sickness and Death*
776 Most sicknesses come from infection or
[888] malnutrition. To the natives, however, ill-
nesses have a supernatural cause and are
ascribed either to the anger of gods and
spirits or to old people who have a nagual
or who can throw a spell. The most frequent
explanation is that naguales or supernatural
beings are acting against people. They can
adopt human or animal form or appear as

[P 224-A]

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

fire and then hung up to destroy the impression and prevent leaving behind with it a portion of the soul, on which magic could be worked. Our own observation was that this precaution was carelessly observed.

Although magic may be worked on impressions on leaves, bits of hair, earth from fields, etc., the Indians showed no objection at all to being photographed beyond a certain embarrassment, and very little to being drawn. Often they asked to be photographed, and at some villages posed readily for sketches.

Although, according to Nuñez de la Vega,* there were originally several classes of shamans among these tribes, at present they seem to have narrowed down to one medicine-man type. Primarily these are doctors, but in their practice they preserve certain priestly characteristics. They have a real pharmacopeia, and Ladinos and occasional foreigners who have tried their skill testify to the effectiveness of the medicines.† All their knowledge, however, is kept in greatest secrecy. Just enough medicine is administered at once for a dose, the shaman watching to see that it is consumed, and none held out for identification. Of these we were able to find out virtually nothing. Serpent fat, *junto-tcan,* is in common use as a rub for colds. Head-aches and extreme drunkenness are treated by cutting the forehead with a bit of sharp glass, and bleeding is resorted to in some other cases. The use of the tourniquet in cases of snake-bite is widely known.

All applications of medicine are accompanied by prayers recited in such a way as to be unintelligible to lay hearers. The prayers are an essential part of the treatment.

Shamans are trained from early infancy, being selected probably by the older practitioners. One of them takes the student in hand and teaches him prayers and medicines proper to his particular specialty. With this goes a certain amount of plain magic. Whether a man may then study under others and continue learning is not known; however, they vary in reputation both for their ability at curing, and for clairvoyance, casting spells, etc. Casting spells is a sort of reverse function of doctoring, the man who can cure disease being, obviously, able also to cause it.

One of the two words given for a shaman, *poci',* shows an interesting resemblance to the Tzeltal for rum, *poc.* This similarity gains importance in view of the real connection between curing and drinking. A shaman definitely will not perform unless he is more

*Op. Cit.
†Cf. Sapper, 1925.

753 statement would be that the names of illnesses are reflexes of all these pressures.

757 Curing strategies more or less line up with this symptom-illness distinction. The early stages of a disease process are handled by medicine, the appropriate form of which and access to which, most adults in Aguacatenango control. For example: for stomach gas, give bicarbonate soda with lime (to drink); for a cough, give boiled brown sugar (to drink); for nausea and headache give té limon. As the combination of "symptoms" increases in the later stages of a disease process, most adults lose control over knowledge of the proper array of medicines and rituals. These in turn become combinatorially more complex. It is at these later stages of the disease process that curers and doctors are called in.

756 759 Curers and doctors differ most obviously in that doctors are ladinos and curers tend to be Indians (although ladino curers are known). In addition, they deal with illnesses in sufficiently contrastive ways so that two role identifying labels must be 75 maintained. They are both recognized to be able to reduce illness (as a basis for further inference and action) by prescribing medicines that can be purchased in the pharmacy. These may be taken orally, injected, or applied as a salve. The doctor further prescribes and may himself perform some minor surgery, X-ray examinations, and other traditional Western-European

273* 753 **Circumstances under which the drinking of aguardiente can directly cause illness**

Not only does aguardiente in some contexts serve as medium by means of which witchcraft can be communicated, but also it has a certain disease producing potential of its own when it is taken in certain amounts within a certain time period. (The ceremonial drinking plus one or more adjacent informal drinking units.) We will now review a few of the disease processes which are interpreted as beginning immediately 273* 164 adjacent to drinking performances. The most common illness that results from drinking is a state that may be glossed as a "hangover" /GOMA, XCAMEL YU*UN TRAWO/. This is a minor illness which involves the symptoms of "headache, loss of appetite, dehydration, vomiting, diarrhea, trembling," the response to 273* 757 461 which is selected from the following alternative set. The condition of GOMA is nearly exclusive with the ability to engage in routine agricultural performances. This means that the day after a ceremonial drinking plus informal drinking segment, a man does not work. He has the choice, then, of staying around the house or leaving the house to perform some minor tasks such as gathering poles to support chayote vines, looking at his cattle, or any other task that takes him out of the household setting. This is an important distinction since if a man stays around the house he increases the probability that he will con-

273 tinue drinking by some considerable degree. The confusion of
a 757 setting with cure for GOMA is further reduced if we consider the specific remedies which are employed. Aguardiente is a "hot" substance. This "heat" causes the illness, and the illness can be reduced by drinking remedies which are "cool" or "cold." Coca cola is such a remedy. A man may stay around the house and drink coca cola by way of reducing the GOMA. A second remedy for reducing a hangover is to drink as much as one-half a pint of aguardiente. This is the Tzeltal equivalent to the "hair of the dog" response. Drinking a small amount of aguardiente and staying around the house are the two conditions which make it most likely that the man will continue drinking that day. Drinking coca cola and staying around the house make it slightly less likely that a man will drink on that day. Finally, drinking either aguardiente or coca cola and leaving the house to perform some minor task makes it less and less probable that a man will go on drinking that day. These observations are relevant to an interpretation of the cure for a hangover since they clearly include alternative plans for further action which either produce further hangovers or do not. In other words, if one wishes to cure a hangover and go on drinking, he drinks aguardiente and stays in his house where his previous day's drinking companions will be sure to find him. If, on the

273* other hand, one wishes to stop drinking, he will drink coca cola
757 and leave the house.

Normally, a cure for a hangover, if it is not followed by more drinking, is successful in a one day time period. The length of a drinking performance can be computed as ceremonial
273* drinking plus informal drinking plus one day. If some symptons
753 of the hangover continue on successive days, or if the hangover
757 has unusual symptoms, individuals are alerted to the fact that the drinking performance is about to cause more serious consequences. There follow some text fragments in which the more
*273 753 757 serious consequences are displayed and discussed by informants.

539 M. HA* YA HK'AN HTAMTIK RASON TY*L LIHK HATE X.HAL *IK TA SBAKEL HTATA I.

I want to ask the reason why my uncle's backache began.

D. *AX TA YOXEBAL HA*WIL, ME TA XCANEBAL HA*WIL HONC HATE LA STA E.

It began about three or four years ago.

PERE HUN TA TE ...TA K'AXIX ... TA XK'AXEL KUXEBAL YU*N *IP LEK YAKUB HONAX.

It seems that . . . a while ago . . . it was just after Holy Week, because he drank so much.

TONC BAZ'IL LAH YAK' HONC HATE HUN *U MA* BEN E.

For one month he couldn't walk, he really had it.

HUN LAH TA YU*N XIHIL TE* A YA*Y STUK TA YOK I.

It was as though there was a splinter in his foot.

273* YA YAK' HONC HU*N K'AS YU*N TONC YU'N HIC XKOTLAHAN YA X
753 LOK' E.
757
539 It hurt a lot. He had to crawl to go out.

YU*NEN TA TRAWO LA HTA XCI.

Perhaps I got it from the trago," he said.

YU*NEN POX YA SK'AN HONC YU*N AK' TAK'IN E XCI.

"Perhaps it needs medicine, if only there were some money," he said.

X TAL AWA*Y Z'IN E, LI* LA XBAHT TA SBAKEL I.

The next thing he knew, it was here in his back.

WOKOL STUK *IL TAT TONAX YU*N SZ'IKOHONC HEHK STUK TU*L TA *A*TEL I.

It's not a little that he suffers, especially as he is now a mayordomo.

M. MA*YUK YA YAK' SBAH TA POXTAYEL.

Isn't he being cured?

HA*YUN MA*K XCOHP.

That's why it's not getting better.

273* In this particular case, the illness being referred to
753 had already lasted three or four years, according to the text. The association of drinking with the onset of this illness was strong enough, then, to be remembered by the sick man's wife after a period of years.

273* In the following text fragment, we see another example
753
539 of this reasoning about the relationship between illness and drinking.

273* 539 And then to Jose, "Don't take him away, sir, don't take him. Don't you see how we have suffered? He was going to die. He got better with great difficulty, after many efforts. He's not well."

HE* *AYIL ABI TUME C'IN TO *EHUK YU*N TONC MA XC'UN TUT'A KALBETIK I, KAWAY HATE XMALAWANIX HAL TRAWI LA XLOK'AT XAN, HAMAL YU*N MA*K AWA*Y TUT'A HALBOTAT HIL E, HA* KAK'AN XCAMATA TRAW, PERE YU*N MA XU* HONA XCI.

Ay, dios, why should I worry? He's not a little boy. He just doesn't do what we tell him. "You know that the trago is killing you, but you go out again as if you didn't know what they told you. You just want to die of trago." "But I can't stand it, I feel so bad," he said.

273* 757 In order to avoid consequences of drinking as severe as those detailed above, some men procure medicine designed to reduce the probability of their drinking when the occasion arises. We have already cited a text fragment in which such a "cure" is discussed. There, some doubt was expressed as to the medicine's effectiveness, but Candelario, who had just taken it, was not willing to risk dying by drinking while it was in effect. In another text fragment, more evidence in favor of the "cure" is offered as follows:

273* 539 I. HA* PERSA XPOXIL I PE MA HNA* ME *AY WAN XPOXIL TAT *E MA*YUK *E PE XCIIK HONAX.

Some medicine is necessary, but I don't know if there is one, sir. Many people say there isn't.

M. *AY NIX *A YUN TOL STOHOL.

There is, but it's expensive.

273* 539 M. *A MA* BA YUC', HA* XANIX TEME YUN A SMAK TE*K E.

Ah, he hasn't drunk since. It's good if it stops him for a while.

I. *E HAYUN HIC A KAL, TEME SPAS TE*K POX TU*L A YUC' TATIK SEKRETARYI.

That's what I mean, if it works like the remedy the Secretary took.

*IPAL HA*WIL TE*K MA*K YUC' HAL A YUC'BE XPOXIL *ILE.

He hasn't drunk for many years, he took medicine.

M. HIC STUK *ILE HUH*U.

You're right about him.

HA* TONIX PERSA STUK C'IN POX LEKTIK (YUC'E)

Those of us who drink are very much interested in such a medicine.

273* 757 The general characteristics of the medicine for reducing the strength and number of one's drinking performances, as perceived by Aguacatenangueros, are the physical effects if one continues to drink after taking it. Illness and even death may be expected, as has been suggested in the texts cited. The medicine thus overrides all social and psychological "reasons" for drinking. One can tell whether or not the medicine is effective by attempting to continue to drink. If one wishes to drink and feels no unusually bad effects therefrom, it is clear that the medicine is not working.

273* 753 Aguardiente is illness-producing either directly because of its substance, or symbolically because it is one of the media

273 755 [757] The administration of trago directly to the patient in the course of the curing ceremony is unusual, though it may be mixed with other ingredients (raw eggs, essence of rosemary, the curer's saliva and/or chicken blood) and a cup or bowl of this mixture given to the patient to drink. Alternatively it may be applied to the body of the patient, the curer blowing it on him a mouthful at a time. Aguardiente is occasionally used to drug chickens which are used in the course of the ceremony. We have seen chickens so drugged placed on the patient's head where they calmly remain for a period of a half hour or more.

273 764 Drinking during the funeral ceremony

The burial of a dead person takes place within a period of twenty-four hours after he is declared to be dead. The time lag depends primarily on how soon a casket can be bought, the primary source of caskets being carpenter shops in Pinola--a six hour round of walking. The morning after the death, neighbors and bilateral male relatives walk out to the cemetery to dig the grave. They take a liter of trago with them which they drink while they are digging the grave. Others of this group stay at the house of the dead person where a ceremonial is being prepared, where the cadaver is being washed and dressed and wailed over by women who are closely related to the dead person.

The return of the grave diggers to the house signals the

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

the curer is a potentially dangerous witch, he can be persuaded to fight the evil power of another. One of the most dangerous and powerful witches, until he was killed five years ago, was a man who boasted as he was curing a patient, "The evil [pukuh] in me will win over that of the witch!"

Curing behavior is classified in Tzeltal according to five major schema: (1) pulsing (*pikel č'iʔ*), (2) drawing out the evil (*slok'es ʔak'tamel*), (3) calling the soul (*tamohel*), (4) medicating the illness (*poltawane camel*, and (5) medicating the house (*poltawane na*). Each behavioral schema represents the highest level of a behavioral taxonomy which includes discrete actions described below.

Pulsing. The course of the cure for all illnesses is set in motion by the diagnosis through pulsing Throughout the cure, pulsing is performed to gauge the effectiveness of each step. The curer is chosen on the basis of his ability to pulse; when anyone is asked why a curer was chosen, the consistent answer is, "He knows how to pulse." The significance of the curer's ability to pulse is related to the fact that the first level of contrast establishing a taxonomy of diseases is that between "evil" and "good" determined by pulsing. The essence of the pulsing is a diagnosis of the patient's social relationships. It is a kind of exploratory "sociopsy" comparable to the stage of biopsy in modern medicine, resting on a notion that the witch "leaves his signature in the blood." and the curer "hears/feels" it. He does this by placing his thumb over the pulse at the wrist, inner elbow, and sometimes the inner knee joint and temples. The logic is that the blood passes from the heart and "talks" at the pulse points, revealing the condition and needs of the heart. The blood of the curer enters into communication with that of the patient when he holds his own thumb pulse against the patient's pulse. He does not look for the physiological symptoms on which modern medicine bases diagnosis, but for what the blood tells about the patient's relations with people in his social environment and for what the heart needs. Disease symptomology, such as fever and locus of pain, provides the basis for assigning medicines at a later stage in the cure.

Some curers use thirteen candles set before the curing arch to corroborate diagnoses made in the pulsing: if, for example, the candles bend in-

71 Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

755 ward, the illness is interpreted as a result of trouble within the family. But the use of candles is often interpreted as showing the curer's lack of ability to pulse properly.

755 *Taking out the evil.* The evil is drawn out by bleeding or by
• 757 sucking. Bleeding is diagnostic, curative, and preventative in function. Confirmation of the preliminary diagnosis made in pulsing comes in the bleeding: "clinical" examination by pulsing is reviewed by the "laboratory" findings of the blood analysis. Bleeding is used in cases of surface pains to draw out the evil which is causing the pain. The patient enters the sweatbath so that the heat will stimulate the flow of blood and lessen the pain. The curer makes scratches with broken glass near the source of the pain. Cupping, called *la ventosa,* is done by placing hot water, a piece of pitch pine, and thirteen handmade cigarettes in the gourd. These are very "hot" items, not in the sense of caloric content but of soul power. When these hot items have heated the gourd, they are thrown out and liquor is poured in and burned. When all the liquor is burned, the gourd is slapped onto the cut, so that it "grabs" the flesh, and the blood flows into
755 the vacuum. The diagnosis comes in burning the blood. The curer takes the gourd into the yard so that the odors containing the evil will not linger in the house when the blood is burned. He is accompanied by the guests while the patient remains in the house with an attendant. He gives an account of what the witch has put in the blood. Some of the items I have seen discovered were a wood splinter, explained as evidence of the envy the witch felt because the patient's husband was making a fence; lard, evidence that the witch coveted a pig of the patient; grain of corn or bean, evidence that the witch envied them their harvest. These items are probably inserted by the curer in some slight of hand trick.

The curer prevents the recurrence of the disease by sealing the cuts with garlic and liquor, elements which the devil does not like. The power of the curer is exhibited when he draws out the evil. At this moment he is confronting the enemy directly, fighting the animal spirit of whoever is causing the witchcraft.

The items found in the blood are always attributed to the envy of the witch who is causing the illness. Envy can be countered by the curing rit-

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

uals. The resources expended in the process of curing counterbalance the patient's greater wealth which provoked the envy initially. The witch starts the sickness by going to one of the caves in the hills where he burns a candle, drinks a liter of liquor, and prays that the object of his envy fall ill. The essential element in the fight against the witch is the act of drinking by all those present at the curing. In consuming their own liquor, often paid for by the sale of cattle or crops, they mitigate the envy of the witch. If the witch persists, he must continue to spend money on the liquor necessary to initiate the witchcraft after each ceremonial cure. Part of the tactic of a rapid series of cures is to demonstrate willingness to use all of the family's resources if necessary to counteract the rituals of the witch. The statement that they drink "in order to finish with the money" takes on significance in this strategy of limiting envy by expending resources.

Medicating the illness. The cure of the disease comes in the bathing or heating of the patient and the application or ingestion of medicines, usually a combination of patent medicines purchased in the nearby Ladino town. The specific cures called for depend on the secondary classification of the disease: if it is a "cold disease," hot medicines are applied; if it is a "hot disease," cold medicines are used.

Two kinds of bathing are performed, one a kind of steam bath, called "rise over the fire," for cold illnesses, and another a cold bath for hot illnesses. Chills and fever require both treatments. In the first case, a large charcoal fire is made inside the main room of the patient's house. When the fire is strong, two thick green logs are placed on it to create smoke. The patient mounts on a stool over the fire, and a straw mat is held over him to capture the steam. When he is sweating a great deal, the curer gives him a drink of cold medicines.

The cold bath is given with thirteen branches from bushes which grown near the spring.[4] Patent medicines dissolved in Spring water include syrup of *isidro*, cloves, vapor rub, epsom salts, aspirin, and other cold herbs or juices such as lemon, grapefruit, *cintula*, and *tok'o*. If the trouble is chills and fever, hot herbs such as *inajo*, *lumahiya*, and apple may be added to restore the body's hot-cold balance. A bad curer may reverse the medicines,

4. These include plants called *tihiliha?*, *yokmut*, *tzitzil hič*, *čelwamal* and *yetalbulha?*.

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

giving hot medicines for hot diseases. If this is discovered, he will be subject to accusations of witchcraft. The relatives of the patient are present as witnesses "to see what medicines are given."

In the case of infections, the curer cauterizes the wound, a process called "take out the odor." First he smells the wound, checking on the severity of the infection. He mixes chile and hot charcoal and puts them on the wound to "cause the evil to rise to the surface." He then sucks on the wound, and spits out a "worm" which indicates the kind of evil caused by witchcraft. He covers the wound with mentholated cream and binds it. The patient is kept covered.

Calling the soul. The major effort in soul-calling (tamohel) is concentrated on preparing the patient and the house for the return of his soul. This is done for illnesses caused by fear and resulting in soul-loss. Here a knowledge of the setting is crucial to understand each act. An arch of pine boughs is set at the center post because it is here that the souls of the inmates of the house cluster (over the square hole at the foot of the post where the sheep's head is buried during the inauguration of the house). Thirteen candles, including a large, 50-cent one in the center and twelve 20-cent ones, are set before the arch. If the patient is being cured in the house of the curer, which happens when he goes to another town for a cure, the arch is put near the door in order that his soul not mingle with the souls of the curer's household. The patient is laid out on a mat in front of the curing arch, or if he is a small child, he is held in the arms of his mother. The curing is scheduled so that the arrival of the soul occurs when it will not be seen by people passing in the street. This would cause it embarrassment, and it would not enter the house. The patient continues to sleep under the arch each night until it is removed nine days later. As he sleeps, his soul enters in a dream and is reunited with the body. A guitar and seed rattle are played continuously during the ceremony to make the spirits of guests, patient, and house "of one heart." Many rounds of liquor are served in order to "finish with our money" and thus reduce the envy of the one who caused the witchcraft.

The soul-calling is combined with a cold bath to cure the illness. The patient is disrobed, and the curer brushes him with branches of plants

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

755
776
782
[539]

The companions of the patient
are gathered here with his father
In the center of this other holy
earth
Holy earth, take out the fever.

The curer then calls upon each of the saints of the surrounding towns, asking for help in bringing about a miracle. First he calls upon the major saints of the pueblo (Santa Lucía, San Francisco, Santiago, San Pedro the Martyr, and the Virgen de Rosario), then those of Teopisca (San Augustín and the Virgen de Mercedes), of San Cristóbal (San Cristóbal and Justo Juez), of Villa Carranza (Señor del Pozo and San Bartolo), of Socoltenango (the Virgen de Candelaria), of Villa las Rosas (San Miguel and San José), of Comitán (Santo Domingo, San Caralampio, and the Virgen de Santa Teresa), and finally Señor Esquipulas of Tulanca. Thus he defines the meaningful spiritual universe of the village, building a kind of hegemony of defense and protection.

755
757

At any point throughout the cure the patient may consult the doctor sent by the I.N.I., the priest, or the schoolteacher, all of whom compete with each other in gaining clients by dispensing medicines. This does not undermine the role of the curer since curing the disease is considered a separate issue from stopping the witchcraft which is causing it. The disease may be cured, but the persistence of the witchcraft will eventually cause death through spiritual malaise unless treated by the curer.

[756]
[776]

All the people of the village know the common herbs and the sicknesses for which they should be used. The basis for the curer's power thus is not specialized knowledge of medicines, but the strength of his swayohel in fighting that of the enemy, and his esoteric knowledge of pulsing.

756

Formerly curers received minimal pay for practicing. The family of the patient offered about 20 pesos or worked in the fields of the curer. Curers refused larger payments because they said their skill came from God, and it would be a sin to accept money for it. This practice is continued today by one old curer for patients within the community. However, he receives from 100 to 200 pesos from out-of-town patients. A Ladina from the neigh-

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 156]

591 in the house of a mother-in-law" as one informant expressed it.
[606] If they did not try to avoid this, they would have unquestioningly to obey their affinal relatives (especially the mother-in-law), live in a place in which they have practically no power to make decisions, and where, for a long time (even after the birth of a first child), they would be considered outsiders. But because the refusal to follow the husband means the end of the marriage, most husbands are successful in changing the place of residence, and few couples remain long in a uxorilocal setting.

59
•757
606 3. The third reason for living in the wife's parent's house is a temporary one.

When a woman is living in her husband's parent's house, the household head should take the responsibility for curing if she gets mildly ill, paying the necessary expenses of medicine and curer (or doctors) because she is, by the fact of her residence within the compound, dependent on them.

If a sickness becomes a prolonged or a seriously expensive case, she becomes a burden to the household, without being an economic asset. Both her reproductive and her labor powers become annulled, and her husband's father can refuse to pay for her curing. In this case, she is transferred from her husband's group to her natal household, which becomes responsible for her curing. Usually her husband will move with her, but keep on working the land with his father.

59
602
757 These changes of residence create a certain amount of tension between the parents of the young couple because the woman's parents insist that it is not their duty to care for the daughter,

59 602 757 since she is married and living away from them, while the father believes that he did not make a good choice for his son, selecting a bride who is so much of a problem. While a woman is sick, both pairs of parents will bargain endlessly over whose duty it is to pay for the curing. Sometimes, both sets of parents agree on paying half of the cost, and then the woman stays in her husband's compound. But if this is not possible, the shift in responsibility for the woman is symbolically expressed in the shift in residence.

592 562 Other reasons, of a psychological nature, bring forth this residential change. The whole system of emotional ties which a woman has created in her lifetime before marriage is broken at the time she changes households to get married. She is thrown into the midst of a group of people, including her husband, whom she hardly knows, and during the first years of marriage she is an outsider in her husband's household. She must work for a woman she did not know previously, her mother-in-law, and obey her without delay. Although previously she worked for her mother, the role of a mother and of a mother-in-law are not equivalent, especially in their affective content.

592 562 606

606 593 An interesting triadic relationship develops between a woman, her husband and her mother-in-law, in which she is the one with the smallest amount of social power (see Caplow [1956], Mills [1954], for a discussion on the dynamics of triad coalitions). In spite of the large amount of interaction between the two women, the relationship is not one of friendly collaboration.

592 593 606 Command and sanctions are in the hands of the mother-in-law. Obedience is expected from the younger woman. There is a

592 clear social differentiation in the allocation of authority, and
593
606 the relationship is somewhat antagonistic. Many a man finds himself between a mother complaining bitterly of the laziness of his wife, and a wife of the hardness of his mother. This antagonistic relation is attenuated by the presence of other women in the household (which makes for an easy schedule in the allocation of every day work) and by the personalities of the individuals involved.

606 The relation of a woman and her father-in-law is characterized by a very mild form of avoidance. Verbal interaction is
[264] initiated usually by the father-in-law, and is formal. At meal times the social distance between the two is expressed in the seating arrangements, the young wife sitting at the edge of the eating space, the farthest apart from her husband's father.

593 Together with the pressures brought about by the structure of these relationships, a woman must go through a process of adjustment with the husband, whom she knew only slightly before marriage.

Given this situation, when she is sick, her natal household offers to her certain emotional attractions that her hus-
591
• 759 band's household does not. The change of residence at the time of sickness provides a simple example of what Malinowski called the functional solutions offered by a society for the satisfaction of physical as well as emotional needs of the individual. Three cases of residential change for this reason occurred during the summer of 1958.

000 Independently of the analysis of geographical distribution